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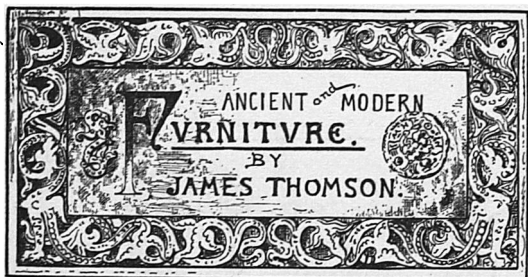
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A SERIES OF ARTICLES—NUMBER TWO—THE DESIGN.

It would be difficult to give definite rules for the guidance of the novice in furniture designing, the sense of proportion, the relation of one part to another, to "know" when a thing is just right as it were, can only come with experience, the study of the different orders of architecture, particularly the moldings and their relation to other members, will do much to improve one in this respect.

Good general effect is to be considered rather than mere perfection or "prettiness" of detail, the size of the object, the situation it is destined to occupy, and the circumstances under which it is to be viewed, all require to be considered. We will find that the eye refuses to receive more than a certain field of vision, and as this is increased it seeks relief in increase of view, thus we may set it down as a general rule to be consistent with the instinctive laws of vision, that the point of view should be at a distance at least twice the size of the object. Supposing the object to be a sideboard six feet long, in order to judge of its appearance as

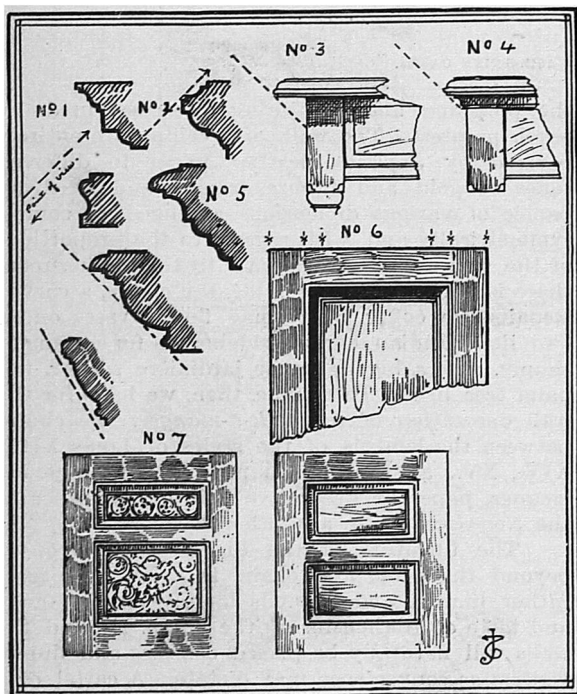


FIG 4

a whole we should view it at a distance of, say twelve feet, and even at this distance it would not all come within the complete range of vision. This being so, it follows that much of the beauty of fine work would be lost, and thus the proper disposition of the masses of light and shade in sculptured ornamentation and moldings is of the utmost importance, it is one of the essentials to success in a design, but of this we will treat at greater length in a future article.

The ability to make a neat looking drawing, while a highly desirable accomplishment in a designer, is not essential to success; excellence in design does not alone consist in mere mechanical execution. Although this fact seems to be entirely overlooked in many of our art schools, it is quite possible for one to produce what would be considered a work of art, and yet be worthless for all practical purposes. It is not so much the manner of execution as the ideas therein expressed that gives value to a design. If deficient in these the measure of value would be as a drawing or picture only. There is sometimes, from a practical point of view, more actual value in a few rough lines from the hand of a master, than can be found in many of what are commonly called "finished" drawings. No better examples of good design can be found than the drawings of the late B. J. Talbert. In breadth and vigor of treatment in the adaptation of Gothic and early English forms to modern requirements, he excelled all others. To construct strongly and well seemed to be his first care, ornament being a secondary consideration and growing naturally from the necessities of the occasion, never introduced for its own sake but to beautify or emphasize the constructive design.

All articles of furniture should be designed—architecturally, that is to say: Nothing should

enter into the constructive design except such parts as are absolutely necessary, just as the builder would frame the simple wooden building. Every piece of material that enters into consideration should have a reason for being. Ornament should be applied where plainness of surface demands relief, never for its own sake. The besetting sin with many is excess of ornamentation. It is impossible for such people to see a plain surface without wishing to decorate it. It requires the skill of a master to crowd ornament with any degree of success, and if the novice would be content with less ambitious efforts, the desired results would be more certain of attainment. Better no ornament than ornament misapplied.

One element of strength in much of the furniture designed by architects is in the beauty of moldings. Furniture designers are often content to make use of any molding that comes to hand, regardless of whether it is suitable or not, overlooking the fact that much of the success of a design depends on the play of light and shade in molded panel work, and that the molding should be in keeping as regards style with the body on which it is used. Much of the beauty of our Colonial work is in the sweetness of line in molding, and no matter how plain the interior finish, we generally find the moldings satisfactory. In the designing of moldings the position they are intended to occupy should be considered—the cornice molding or any molding seen at an elevation should be designed so that when viewed from below the members would be all visible. No. 1, Fig. 4, illustrates our idea. No. 2 shows molding which should not be used much above the level of the eye as much of it would be lost at an elevation. This is a mistake often made. The same rule will apply to moldings seen below the eye. The projection of tops of tables, cabinets, etc., is also worthy of consideration; should the top have a good projection such as shown in No. 3, Fig. 4, the necessity for thickness is not so great, as the depth of shadow compensates in a measure for want of thickness. No. 4, Fig. 4, shows top with little projection.

Moldings should also be designed on some construction line such as shown in No. 5, Fig. 4, from an Italian XVI. century bench. It will be noticed the members nearly all touch a line drawn at an angle of forty-five. The width of door stiles and framing in relation to the panels must be considered. While it is impossible to give any rule to follow, we should say that where the entire door is twelve inches wide six inches may be given to the panel, two inches to the moldings, and four inches to the stiles. Should the door stile be narrow and the panel wide the effect is far from pleasing. As a general rule the stiles should be wider than the moldings. We have endeavored to illustrate our idea in No. 6, Fig. 4, where a door is divided into equal divisions; the effect is not so pleasing as when the lower panel is the larger, as in No. 7, Fig. 4.

Fig. 5 shows a simple sideboard, after the style of Colonial times, in which we have endeavored to embody the principles herein advocated. The standards and vailing on which to display plates,

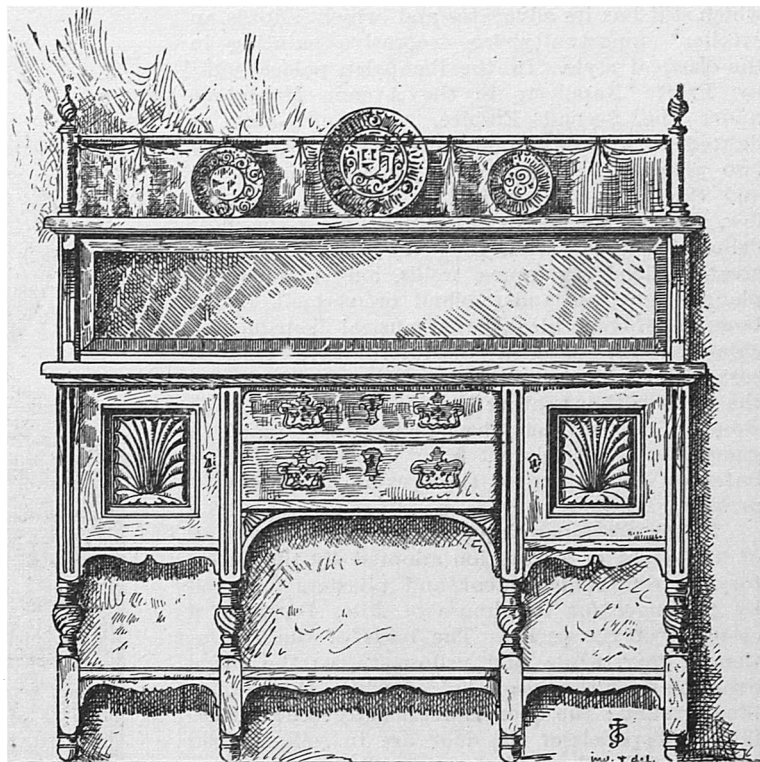


FIG. 5 MODERN COLONIAL SIDEBOARD

are intended to be of brass, as are also the trimmings of drawers. Executed in oak, cherry, or better still, mahogany, we have an article that answers every requirement for use in a small dining room at a moderate cost, and much more satisfactory than the showy "insincere" abominations of the shops, with their mass of meaningless ornamentation of the gingerbread order. Fig. 6 shows chair to match, upholstered in leather.

Our next article will be devoted to the consideration of furniture construction, illustrated with ancient and modern examples of the same.

DESIGN FOR LIBRARY FURNITURE.

(See opposite page).

FIRE-PLACE to be in black or dark green marble, with the exception of the frieze in white, and portion round the opening in red.

The over-mantel and all the woodwork of the several articles in suite, to be in dull-polished walnut.

The seat and back of lounge to be in stamped leather, with the pattern picked out in gold bronze.

The bookcase to have sliding doors in front, and the compartments at ends are made (with hinged doors) to hold rolls of drawings, maps, etc.

The table has two drawers in each side, and the top, after allowing three inches walnut margin, to be covered with plain leather.

NUMEROUS illustrations of the great skill attained in the decorative arts in Italy, are shown in the valuable contributions of that nation to the Boston Foreign Exhibition. In furniture as in other productions, the Italian representation here is of the finest character. Among objects of importance of this class are the pieces of a set of bed-chamber furniture from Milan, which is valued at \$6,000, and of which the carved and inlaid work is of extreme richness and beauty. The article shows a combination of dark and light wood, the latter, which may be pearwood, resembling ivory. Over the head is an elaborately carved canopy, the cove of which shows figures of cherubs with flowers. Beneath this a top panel of the high headboard is formed with a central recess not unlike a shrine, at the back being seen the carved figures of a mother and child. The headboard below this recessed panel is upholstered with yellow satin tufted. A circular panel at the foot shows a carving of two figures, one being of a child lying asleep beneath a tree, against which leans the other, or perhaps "shaking the dream-land tree." The bureau of this set is semicircular and furnished with a canopied top. The carving is very elaborate, showing designs around the mirror of gorgons heads and figures of nymphs and mermaids, with upright figures on the panels in front. The canopy is formed in branches and vines, within the centre of which is suspended a basket of carved flowers.

LET those who cannot afford the more costly styles of decoration, be contented with simple designs, which they can if they will, obtain in really good taste at a comparatively small cost.

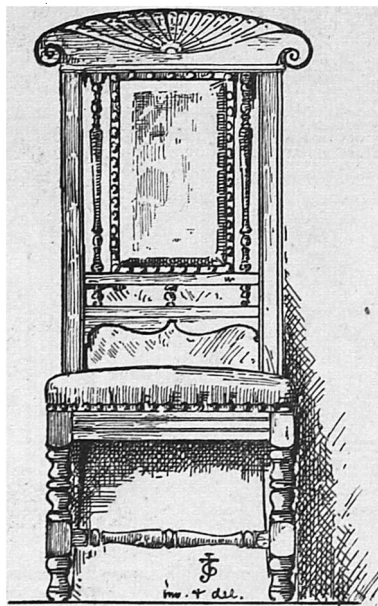


FIG 6

MODERN COLONIAL CHAIR